

Dr Linas Eriksonas

UAB EUROPARAMA

Lithuania

Between a Rock and a Hard Place: a Scientist- Entrepreneur?

Innovation depends on people who are able to generate and apply knowledge and ideas in the workplace and in society at large. Empirical studies on stocks and flows of skills correlated to economic growth figures at the country and industry level have established strong relationships between initial shares of R&D personnel and researchers in employment and subsequent growth in total factor productivity. This led to the conclusion that in order to increase productivity public policies should focus on increasing the share of R&D personnel in industry through supporting industrial placements, collaborative projects and other joint undertakings. Yet such policies (for which the Lisbon Strategy served as the main point of reference for the last 10 years) have failed to produce the expected outcomes. Hence, most recently, “the need for the further work to improve the data, better identify relationships and explore their strength and direction” was raised (OECD, 2011).

The paper will address the main pitfall of the above policies – the assumption that science and business can operate within the same framework of economic logic, while pursuing different societal goals. It will argue that science and business are two distinct domains of human endeavour that operate under different premises which cannot be shared. The paper will focus on discussing the changing socio-economic environment and its impact on science and business: in order to adapt to this new environment scientists need to acquire and use some skills from entrepreneurs while entrepreneurs are in need to develop a better understanding of scientific knowledge. In those cases where individuals cross the boundaries of both a new type of scientist-entrepreneur emerges who acts as a catalyst in science (by bringing about a shift in the dominant scientific paradigm) and as an agent of change in economy (by destructing the existing modes of production and making way for technological breakthroughs).